

BK. VII. steamboat explosions, and extensive conflagrations—property valued at \$10,000,000 having been destroyed by a single fire in Sacramento City. Like casualties constituted the principal items in the domestic history of the country.

Edward Everett Secretary of State.

Edward Everett succeeded Daniel Webster as Secretary of State, on the 9th of October; and his short term of office was characterized by the production of able state-papers on matters of great complexity. John P. Kennedy became Secretary of the Navy on the 31st of July.

The second session of the thirty-second Congress commenced in December, at the usual time, but no important bills were passed—all such being left for the action of the next Congress, under a new administration. An assay office was established in New York, and many private bills were passed. Great debates, however, took place respecting the foreign policy of the government.

Expedition to Japan.

During the summer of 1852, an expedition, comprising seven ships of war, under the command of Commodore Perry, was fitted out for the purpose of securing greater commercial advantages from the empire of Japan. The result was highly satisfactory, many Japan ports being opened to the ships of the United States.

1853.

Organization of Washington Territory.

On the 2d of March, 1853, a new territory, called Washington, was formed by Congress out of the northern part of Oregon. This was the last event of importance which characterized the administration of Mr. Fillmore, who retired to private life, bearing with him the good wishes and the respect of the nation, for the signal ability and integrity with which he had discharged his responsible duties.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL PIERCE.

FRANKLIN PIERCE, of New Hampshire, entered upon his duties as President of the United States on the 4th of March, 1853. His Inaugural Address, delivered before an immense concourse of people assembled on the steps of the eastern portico of the Capitol, gave indication of considerable talent, and of a disposition to discharge the great trust committed to him to the best of his ability. He was the youngest man ever elected to fill the office of President.

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1853.
Inauguration of Pierce.

On the 7th of March, the Senate, in special session, confirmed his cabinet appointments. William L. Marcy, of New York, became Secretary of State; James Guthrie, of Kentucky, Secretary of the Treasury; Robert McClelland, of Michigan, Secretary of the Interior; Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, Secretary of War; James C. Dobbin, of North Carolina, Secretary of the Navy; James Campbell, of Pennsylvania, Postmaster-General; and Caleb Cushing, of Massachusetts, Attorney-General.

The first object of importance which called for the attention of the new government, was a dispute between Mexico and the United States respecting boundaries. The Mesilla Valley was claimed by both governments, under the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—a fertile region, 175 miles in length, and from 30 to 40 miles in width. The boundary commissioners

Mexican boundaries.

BR. VII. assigned the territory to Mexico, but, on the 13th of
 CH. 8. March, 1853, Governor Lane, of New Mexico, although
 A. D. not authorized to do so by the General Government, took
 1853. possession of the disputed territory, in the name of the
 United States, with the view of holding it provisionally,
 until the question of boundary should be definitely
 settled. The dispute was finally settled by negotiation.

Clayton
 Treaty.

On the 9th of March, Mr. Clayton, Secretary of State
 under General Taylor, entered upon an elaborate vindica-
 tion of the treaty negotiated between himself and Mr.
 Bulwer, the English minister; in the course of which
 he discussed the Monroe doctrine, advocating the exclu-
 sion of European powers from further colonization of the
 American Continent, and insisted that it never should
 receive the sanction of the government of the United
 States in any form. Very animated debates followed, in
 which Mr. Mason, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Everett, were
 the most prominent participants. The latter gentleman,
 in a most able speech, urged that conciliation and for-
 bearance should mark the policy of our nation in all such
 complicated questions.

Discharge
 of Thomas
 Kaine.

In the summer of this year an important legal decision
 was rendered respecting the surrender, to foreign govern-
 ments, of alleged fugitives from justice. It grew out of
 the case of Thomas Kaine, charged with an attempt to
 commit a murder in Ireland. His surrender was de-
 manded by the British government; but it was refused,
 by the United States Court, on the ground that the
 requisition should be made on the executive government
 of the United States. This not having been done, the
 prisoner was discharged.

Expedi-
 tion to
 Asia.

In May, 1853, another exploring expedition, consist-
 ing of four armed vessels and a supply ship, was sent
 out by the United States government, with the object

of exploring the eastern coast of Asia, and thus facili-
 tating navigation between China and the western ports
 of the Pacific. Different routes to the Pacific were also
 surveyed, in anticipation of the future construction of a
 railroad. An expedition to go in search of Sir John
 Franklin was fitted out by Mr. Grinnell, and placed
 under the charge of Dr. Kane, who sailed from New
 York on the 31st of May.

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1853.

Kane sent
 in search
 of Frank-
 lin.

On the 14th of July, a palace of iron and glass, of
 beautiful proportions, and immense size, was opened in
 New York, in imitation of the Crystal Palace in Lon-
 don, in which, the year previously, was held the great
 exhibition of art and industry—one of the most imposing
 sights of modern times. The President of the United
 States honoured the inauguration of the edifice with his
 presence; but, in a pecuniary point of view, the exhibi-
 tion was a failure; thus practically demonstrating the
 hazard of repeating experiments. The building still
 remains as an ornament of the city in which it is erected,
 and will doubtless be applied to many useful purposes.

The Crys-
 tal Palace.

On the 29th of August, Mr. Hulsemann, Austrian
 minister at Washington, addressed a letter to Secretary
 Marcy, demanding, in the name of his government, satis-
 faction for the shelter afforded to Martin Koszta, a Hun-
 garian refugee, by Captain Ingraham, of the United
 States sloop of war St. Louis, lying in the harbour of
 Smyrna. Koszta had taken legal measures to become a
 naturalized citizen of the United States; and, while en-
 gaged in business in Smyrna, had been seized, by order
 of the Austrian consul-general, and conveyed on board
 an Austrian brig, with the design of carrying him to
 Trieste, as a rebel refugee. Captain Ingraham claimed
 him as an American citizen, and, on the refusal of the
 Austrian authorities to deliver him up, threatened to fire

The Koszta
 affair.

Bk. VII.
Ch. 8. on the Austrian vessel. The Austrians surrendered their prisoner, who then returned to the United States. A. D.
1853. The act gave great umbrage to the Austrian government, and Mr. Hulsemann threatened its displeasure, but the affair ended without further difficulty. Captain Ingraham was much commended for his zeal in defending the honour of the American flag, and Congress voted him a sword as an evidence of its approbation.

Calamities
and casual-
ties.

The summer of 1853 was marked by unusual casualties and public misfortunes. The yellow fever, at New Orleans, carried off 6442 persons; a steamship, on its route to San Francisco, was wrecked, with a loss of 200 lives; and a railroad accident at Norwalk, in Connecticut, destroyed 50 people.

Father
Gavazzi.

During the summer, New York was visited by Father Gavazzi, an Italian refugee, who, by his intemperate denunciation against the Papal government, originated a series of useless agitations, which extended to Canada, and ended in disgraceful riots.

Kansas
and Ne-
braska
bill.

Congress re-assembled in December, at the usual time, but no question of absorbing national interest was discussed, until Mr. Douglas introduced his celebrated bill, which agitated the Union from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In this act, he proposed to incorporate those vast territories which lie west of the State of Missouri and of the Rocky Mountains, embracing one-fourth of the public lands of the United States, into two territories, called Kansas and Nebraska. In reference to these two territories, he proposed to abolish the compromises of 1820 and 1850, and allow the inhabitants to decide for themselves whether slavery should be admitted or excluded.

Abolition
of the com-
promises
of 1820
and 1850.

During nearly four months, the question was debated with great energy and talent in Congress, and also en-

gaged the attention of public meetings throughout the northern States. No other subject gained the ear of the national representatives. Finally, after the most stormy debates known since the adoption of the Constitution, the bill, with some inconsiderable amendments, was passed by both houses, and received the signature of the President. Bk. VII.
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A. D.
1854.
Passage of
the bill.

A few days subsequent to the final passage of the Nebraska Bill, Boston became the scene of a disgraceful riot, and a deputy marshal was shot dead, while attempting, as was his duty, to enforce the law respecting fugitives from labour. The United States troops were ordered out, and the court protected in the discharge of its functions. A fugitive slave having been arrested and brought before the United States Commissioner, he decided in favour of the master, and the slave was conveyed to Virginia in a government vessel. Boston
riots.

Contemporaneous with the discussion in Congress respecting the new territories, difficulties arose with Spain. The American steamer Black Warrior having been seized at Havana, Feb. 28th, 1854, the vessel and cargo were confiscated, on the pretence that a new invasion of Cuba was projected. There was no just ground for the seizure, although it is easy to account for suspicion on the part of the Cuban authorities. The United States Government immediately took measures to inquire into this outrage; and the perpetrators of it, becoming alarmed, agreed to give up the vessel and cargo on payment by the owners of a fine of \$6000. The President of the United States discouraged the attempt of the fillibusters to invade the rights of Cuba, and his seasonable proclamations prevented any hostile expeditions from being fitted out. Seizure of
the Black
Warrior.

Among the events of the year may be mentioned the

BK. VII. bombardment of Greytown, growing out of the perplex-
Ch. 8. ing questions respecting Central America.

A. D. So soon as it became evident that there was a means
1854. for establishing inter-oceanic communication across the

Difficulties Isthmus, a company was organized, under the authority
in Central of the State of Nicaragua, but mainly composed of citi-
America. zens of the United States, for the purpose of opening
Nicaragua such a transit by way of the river San Juan and Lake
Transit Company. Nicaragua. This soon became a much-favoured route to

California. In anticipation of the opening of this line of communication, a number of adventurers took possession of the old Spanish fort at the mouth of the river San Juan, in open defiance of the States of Central America. These adventurers changed the name of this port from San Juan del Norte to Greytown, gradually repudiated the control of the State to which this territory belonged, and, finally, attempted to extend their jurisdiction to adjacent territories, which were in possession of the Nicaragua Transit Company. A series of outrages was perpetrated by the adventurers; among which were an attempt to seize the captain of one of the steamboats in the service of the company, on a charge of murder, and the transfer of property belonging to the company, at their depôt at Punta Arenas, to Greytown. The plunderers were protected by the community at Greytown, and so insulting and unscrupulous was the conduct of the adventurers, that our government demanded reparation for the injuries inflicted; which requisition being unheeded, the sloop of war Cyane was despatched thither, to enforce submission. The town was bombarded, and the property of the residents destroyed. This transaction gave umbrage to some foreign powers, and was regarded by many of them as an act of unnecessary harshness.

Bombard-
ment of
Greytown.

Congress closed its session on the 4th of March, after
having passed but few bills of great public interest; among which was one increasing the annual appropriation to the Collins line of steamers, from \$385,000 to \$850,000; which, however, was vetoed by the President, on the ground that the government would receive no adequate return for the outlay involved, and that it would give a check to the principle of free competition. Congress, at this session, reorganized the consular and diplomatic service, and fixed the salaries of ministers according to a graduated scale, taking as a basis the relative importance of their respective posts, and the expense of living. A bill was also passed, organizing a board to adjudicate claims upon Congress; and Judge Gilchrist, of New Hampshire, Hon. Isaac Blackford, of Indiana, and Hon. Joseph H. Lumpkin, of Georgia, were appointed judges. A bill to provide a retired list for the navy was passed, and also one to increase the army by the addition of two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry. Hiram Powers received a commission to execute some statuary for the Capitol; the postage bill was amended so as to provide for the registration of letters; and the President was authorized to confer the title of Lieutenant-General on the man most eminent for military services. General Scott received the honour of this appointment.

During the preceding year, considerable effort had been made to secure the purchase of Cuba from Spain, and a conference of some of the leading ministers abroad took place at Ostend, with the view of advancing the project. But nothing was accomplished by it; in consequence of which, Mr. Soulé, United States Minister at Madrid, resigned. However desirable the acquisition of Cuba might be to the United States, there are so many

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1855.

Appropriation to
Collins'
steamers.

Court of
Claims.

Navy retired list.

Promotion
General
Scott.

Ostend
Conference.

Bk. VII.
Ch. 8. difficulties connected with its transfer, arising out of the jealousies of the European States, as well as party dissension at home, that there is but little prospect that it can be consummated.

Maine Law
in New
York. About this period New York, in imitation of other States, passed a stringent law against the sale of intoxicating liquors, which was scarcely enforced anywhere. It was subsequently declared to be unconstitutional by the highest legal tribunal, and of course proved to be a failure.

Amend-
ment to
the Consti-
tution of
Massachu-
setts. On the 19th of May, the following amendment to the Constitution of Massachusetts was passed by the Legislature of that State:—"That no person shall be entitled to vote, or be eligible to office in the Commonwealth, unless he shall be born within the jurisdiction of the United States, or unless he shall be the child of an American citizen born during the temporary absence of one or both of his parents from the United States." This amendment, passed with a view of diminishing the political influence of foreigners, was one of the features of the "Know-Nothing" movement, which agitated the country during the years 1855 and 1856, and which was at its height about this time, especially in Massachusetts and Connecticut. This was one of the most transient excitements which ever modified the popular elections in the United States, and was soon lost sight of in the more absorbing agitation pertaining to slavery, which was aroused during the following year.

Colonel
Walker's
Expedi-
tion. On the 27th of June, Colonel Walker sailed from San Francisco, and landed on the coast of Nicaragua, where, having been joined by 300 men, he took possession of the small town of Rivas, with a view of lending his aid to one of the aspirants to the presidency of that State. He had been defeated at Sonora, whither he had

led a similar filibustering expedition during the preceding year; but this last effort was destined to a still more disastrous termination—not, however, until Walker had achieved a most unenviable notoriety.

On the 11th of October, the expedition which had been sent out in search of Dr. Kane returned to New York, with the entire party, which had passed two winters in the high northern latitudes, and had penetrated farther toward the North Pole than any previous expedition on record. The results of this exploration have been beautifully presented by Dr. Kane in one of the most interesting narratives ever written.

Congress assembled at the usual time, but the House of Representatives was unable to elect a Speaker, until the 2d of February, in consequence of the violence of partizan spirit in regard to the great question then agitating the Union. The North and the South were alike jealous of all influences touching slavery, the great question on which was supposed to hang the issue of the next presidential election. The delay in the organization of the House, of course, prevented any attention to public business. Even the Message of the President was delayed until the 31st of December; and the delivering of it took everybody by surprise, in view of the apparent impropriety of recommending measures to an unorganized body. Its promulgation, however, relieved the public mind of much anxiety respecting our foreign relations. Much of the Message was occupied with a discussion of the Nebraska Bill, and the troubles in Kansas—altogether the most exciting in the memory of this generation, but of too recent occurrence to be more than alluded to in this connection.

All evils, however, at last come to an end. The House of Representatives elected a Speaker, Feb. 2d, on the

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Return of
Dr. Kane.

Assem-
bling of
Congress.

Sectional
jealousies
in Con-
gress.

Election of
a Speaker.

Bk. VII. 139th ballot, after an unprecedented array of difficulties.

Ch. 8. Nathaniel P. Banks, Jr. of Massachusetts, was chosen by a plurality vote of 103, being 5 votes less than a majority.

A. D. 1856. On the 26th of February, Millard Fillmore was nomi-

Nomina- tion of Fillmore. nated for the Presidency by a Convention of the American party convened at Philadelphia. Mr. Fillmore was supported by the Southern delegates.

The debates in Congress during this session largely pertained to the Kansas troubles, and the questions originating out of them. On the 20th of May, Mr. Sumner, of Massachusetts, concluded a long speech, in which he commented, with great asperity, upon Senator Butler, of South Carolina, which elicited sharp retorts from Messrs. Mason and Douglas. But these asperities did not end in the Senate Chamber. On the 22d, Mr.

Assault on Sumner. Sumner was attacked, after the adjournment of the Senate, by Mr. Brooks, of South Carolina, a nephew of Mr. Butler, and a member of the House of Representatives. This attack created an immense sensation, and Mr. Brooks resigned his seat, but was re-elected by the people of his Congressional district.

Nomina- tion of Buchanan. The National Democratic Convention assembled at Cincinnati on the 2d of June, and, on the 5th, James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, was unanimously nominated for the Presidency, after the 17th ballot, and J. C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, was nominated for the Vice-Presidency.

Nomina- tion of Fremont. On the 17th of June, the Republican Convention met in Philadelphia, and nominated John C. Fremont for the Presidency.

The Presidential campaign, from this date until the election in November, completely absorbed public attention.

On the 18th of August, Congress adjourned, after

having done little else than discuss the great questions which were agitating the land. The President vetoed several bills which had passed both Houses, appropriating money for internal improvements, some of which were subsequently passed by a two-thirds vote. Large appropriations of public lands were made in aid of western railroads, and \$300,000 were appropriated for the maintenance of friendly relations with the Indians of Oregon. A bill was passed, raising the pay of members of Congress to \$3000 a year, or \$6000 for the entire Congress, the mileage remaining as before, with deductions in case of voluntary absence.

Congress adjourned without passing the usual civil appropriation bills, in consequence of a proviso being attached to the army bill, in the House of Representatives, to the effect that none of the money should be appropriated for the prosecution of persons charged with political offences. The President immediately issued a proclamation, convening an extra session of Congress on the 21st of August, which passed the bills, without the proviso, by a small majority. Nearly \$64,000,000 were appropriated during this session, exclusive of the lands granted to railroads.

The usual excitement attendant on a Presidential canvass was allayed by the election of Mr. Buchanan, on the 4th of November, by a majority of 52 electoral votes.

Congress met on the 2d of December, and the opening weeks of the session were chiefly occupied by general discussions on the slavery question and the doctrine of "Squatter Sovereignty." Among the important bills passed during the session were the Indian Appropriation Bill, giving \$700,000 to appease the natives of Oregon; a new Tariff bill, which considerably reduced the existing duties; and the Atlantic Telegraph Bill, appro-

Bk. VII.
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1856.

Congres-
sional ap-
propriations.

Extra ses-
sion.

Election of
Buchanan.

Meeting of
Congress.

1857.

Important
bills.

Bk. VII. priating \$70,000 per annum to the company. The
Ch. 8. House of Representatives expelled two of its members
A. D. for bribery, and other members implicated sent in their
 1857. resignations.

Inauguration of Buchanan. The inauguration of James Buchanan as President took place on the 4th of March, and at 1 o'clock he delivered his inaugural address, on the eastern portico of the capitol. Having determined not to be a candidate for re-election, the nation had great confidence in the sincerity of the views which he advanced. The conservative temper which he had ever manifested, his vast political experience, his age and acknowledged abilities, led all classes to acquiesce peacefully in his elevation, and most people to rejoice in the anticipation of the removal of those evils which, for several years previously, distracted the land.

His cabinet. He made choice of the following gentlemen for his cabinet:—Lewis Cass, of Michigan, Secretary of State; Howell Cobb, of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury; James H. Floyd, of Virginia, Secretary of War; Isaac Toucey, of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Jacob Thompson, of Mississippi, Secretary of the Interior; Jeremiah S. Black, of Pennsylvania, Attorney-General, and Aaron V. Brown, of Tennessee, Postmaster-General.

CONCLUSION.

Conclusion. With the inauguration of Mr. Buchanan, we bring to a close our History of the United States, regretting that our narrow limits will not allow any more extended notice of the numerous points of interest to which we have briefly alluded.

On the retirement of Mr. Pierce, the country was at

peace with all nations, and general prosperity, more than Bk. VII.
 at any previous period, distinguished the United States Ch. 8.
 as the most favoured land on earth.

A. D. 1857.
Extent of territory. The government claims a territorial area comprising 3,221,595 square miles, inhabited by a population which cannot be far from 25,000,000 of people. This vast territory extends from latitude 25° 20' to 49° north, and from longitude 67° 47' to 124° 30' west. The length east and west is about 2600 miles, and the breadth north and south about 1700 miles. It occupies the middle zone of North America. The frontiers measure about 10,000 miles, of which 4000 are sea-coast, and 1500 lake-coast. The territory of the United States extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, and from the British Possessions on the north to the Gulf of Mexico on the south. It is traversed by two principal chains of mountains—the Alleghanies on the eastern side, and the Rocky Mountains on the western side. The Alleghanies are a less continuous chain than the Rocky Mountains, and seldom have summits of more than 6500 feet in height. The Rocky Mountains are on a grander scale, and attain to an elevation of from 8000 to 12000 feet. The immense valley between these mountains is intersected by the Mississippi River, which runs nearly north and south through the centre of the country; and, with its tributaries, affords a steamboat navigation of 8000 miles. The whole country is well supplied with water; its vast lakes and rivers afford every facility for the pursuit of commerce; its climates, as a whole, are salubrious; its soils are the deposits of ages; its minerals are nearly all those which the art of man has hitherto made use of; its productions are the most valued fruits, grains, grasses, and trees, which grow in the temperate zones in any part of the world.

Physical geography.